

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE**Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor**

Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter

UPDATE of 2024 GOALS: Nov. 30, 2023

A repeat violent offender, on the lam after being charged in the killing an elderly woman in Columbus, Ohio, was shot twice during a home invasion in Georgia in the fall.

Trumbull Prosecutor Dennis Watkins is using this case and another Columbus murder involving a local woman as reasons why he is taking specific aim at violent offenders in his county and across Ohio.

The Fayette County, Ga., Sheriff's Office had reported that Michael James Brooks II, 28, of Columbus, Ohio, is being charged with home invasion, burglary and theft by receiving. He also faces murder charges in Ohio after his Georgia felonies are resolved in court. Brooks will have to waive extradition in order to face murder charges in Franklin County, Ohio.

The Georgia homeowner, armed with a gun, confronted an intruder — who had a knife — in his basement on the night of Sept. 14, 2023. Reports state the homeowner warned the intruder before shooting him. The homeowner then left the basement and took up a position on the second floor staircase to protect his family.

“Fayette County Sheriff Barry Babb told reporters the homeowner took his stand as the intruder made his way up the stairs, yelling ‘You’re going to have to kill me!’” The homeowner shot twice striking Brooks both times. Deputies met the intruder as he was coming down the stairs with the wounds. Brooks still put up a struggle as he was taken into custody, reports stated.

Investigators were able to tie Brooks to a deadly home invasion six days earlier through a red Ford F-150 that was taken from Kettering, Ohio, investigators said. The Columbus Division of Police identified Brooks as the man responsible for the deadly stabbing of a 77-year-old woman in Columbus' University District on Sept. 9. Investigators said Brooks did not know the victim.

On Sept. 5, Franklin County court records show that Brooks was released from jail on a personal recognizance bond after he pleaded guilty to two charges of failure to comply with order or signal police officer, dating back to a September 2022 incident in which Brooks was originally charged with a first-degree felonious assault. Warrants, including for a murder charge, were issued this month by both Franklin County Common Pleas and Franklin County Municipal courts to bring Brooks back to Ohio after his Georgia court activity is completed.

Authorities paint Brooks as a violent criminal mostly around Columbus, but records show his criminal history extended south along the Interstate 75 corridor.

Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins read about these Brooks offenses which reminded him of another repeat violent offender — Anthony Pardon — in the Columbus area who about five years

ago had killed former Warren resident Rachael Anderson in a similar home invasion deadly attack while Pardon was on parole.



The **murder of Rachael Anderson, pictured at left**, occurred on January 28, 2018, in [Columbus, Ohio](#). Anderson, a 24-year-old aspiring [funeral director](#), was [kidnapped](#), [raped](#), and brutally [murdered](#) by Anthony Pardon in her apartment on her birthday.

According to reports, Pardon, a [registered sex offender who also was convicted of violent crimes in Georgia and then paroled](#), left Anderson's body in her bedroom closet where she was discovered the next day. A significant amount of [evidence](#) linked Pardon to the crime, including cellphone data and [DNA](#). According to a report, Pardon had tied Anderson up, kept her alive long enough to take her debit card. Anderson's cause of death was stab wounds to the head and neck, but there was also ligature strangulation.

Pardon, at right, was [arrested](#) and eventually convicted in 2020 on charges of aggravated murder, rape, kidnapping, aggravated robbery, and aggravated burglary. He is now 58 years old and serving his [life sentence](#) without the possibility of [parole in Chillicothe Correctional Institution](#).



Watkins says he has a remedy to stop the attacks of repeat violent offenders. "We have been doing just that," he said, pointing to the success of seeing convicted Trumbull County sex offenders Willis Reitz and William Fisher, pictured below left, fail in their bids for release from prison before the parole board in 2023.

"Prisons are treatment facilities and need funding to make sure these schizoid and sociopath types are safe there while at the same time, the

American people remain safe too," Watkins said.

Watkins also has thoughts about these violent offenders being released from prisons.

"The citizens of this country are being subject to cruel and unusual punishment by the unnecessary release of career criminals," Watkins said in telling state officials..."Wake up! Before it is too late, and they are stalking others in your community!"

Watkins is asking fellow prosecutors to take action. "I am encouraging every prosecuting attorney in the state to set up in their county a website preferably with your victim/witness program with a monthly bi-monthly or even quarterly newsletter dedicated to informing the public when:

1. A repeat violent offender is up for parole release;
2. A new violent offense is committed by an inmate released on parole. or;
3. A citizen of your community is injured or killed by a repeat violent offender – even if they are out of town traveling or on vacation.”

Watkins’ office earlier this year received a grant from the governor’s office which is aiding in the prosecution of these repeat violent offenders and handling the post-COVID caseload in Trumbull County. The money allowed Watkins to hire another assistant prosecutor plus an investigator who doubles as a public information officer who edits newsletters informing the public of the above points through the Trumbull County Prosecutor’s Office revamped website.

Additionally, Watkins is using this office newsletter and hopes other prosecutors around the state can do the same in pushing for the legislature to pass the following suggested law changes in Ohio:

- Marsy’s Law should be amended to give more rights to victims in parole board hearings, including extending the amount of time between parole hearings when murderer and sex offenders serving life sentences are denied parole and repeatedly come up again and again for release. We believe special or unique circumstances in these violent acts justify longer extensions than the maximum period of 10 years allowed under current Ohio law. Victims are now being re-victimized by having too many parole board hearings involving dangerous offenders.

In the recent case of opposing the parole hearing of convicted sex offender William Wayne Fisher, Prosecutor Watkins was pleased to see the parole board extend Fisher’s prison stay for at least 10 more years saying the time will allow the victims in that case “some “breathing room in not having to re-live their trauma so frequently.”

- Public Records Law should be changed to allow victims, police, prosecutors, courts, and the public access to inmate information which is being used or promoted by these inmates as reasons for release on parole when such inmates are serving life sentences for murder or raping victims aged 12 or younger. Prosecutor Watkins -- in past letters opposing the parole of convicted murderer Gary Allan Betz -- noted that in a 2007 full parole board hearing for Betz, defense attorney argued that Betz had no disciplinary record while in prison and that the prisoner had a potentially fatal disease in which 50 percent of victims die within five years. Watkins at the time argued that he should have been given a copy of Betz’s medical records so that the state could have them reviewed since the alleged facts are used by the inmates as a basis for a release into the community. The board at the time ruled the prisoner’s medical records were not public and therefore would not be released to the prosecutor. Watkins argues for fairness, because the state with access to these records, possibly could provide new information which counters the argument for a medical-based release. Betz, by the way, had committed the murder while on parole from a previous prison sentence.
- In a recent letter to the executive director of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Watkins has given his support to two lawmakers who are considering the introduction of legislation in Ohio that would legalize a new method of execution in the state with the use of nitrogen gas. He also supports adding other alternative methods of execution which

would expedite the judicial process for the sake of victims of crimes. Watkins wrote that this new method would be imperative since efforts to find a combination of drugs for execution have apparently proven to be fruitless for so long. Plus, the prosecutor points to the fact that two Trumbull County offenders presently sitting on death row – Stanley “Ted” Adams and Danny Lee Hill – have execution dates nearing in February 2025 and June 2026 respectively. Watkins says the victims of these men’s crimes have suffered enough and should be spared the horror of going through further appeals, and see justice finally done with the death sentences carried out.

- For more information, contact newsletter editor Guy Vogrin of Trumbull County Prosecutor’s Office at 330-675-2485.